

Wade (ABM)

EPA Region 3

Pennsylvania

Delaware County

On the Delaware River in

Chester

9 miles south of

Philadelphia

EPA ID# PAD980539407

1st Congressional District

Last Update:

August 2002

Other Names: None

Current Site Status

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection cleaned up this site from 1981 through 1989. In 1981 and 1982, EPA undertook two separate emergency actions to clean up the worst contamination. In 1987, PADEP (then PADER) managed the final site cleanup. EPA, in conjunction with the state, then deleted the site from the National Priorities List (NPL) in 1989. Two five-year reviews of the final remedy were conducted in 1993 and 1999, both concluding that the site remains protective of human health and the environment.

Site Description

The three-acre Wade site, located on the west bank of the Delaware River in Chester, Delaware County, Pennsylvania is located in a light

industrial area. The nearest residential area is about 1,000 feet from the site. Located at the site was a rubber recycling facility from around 1950 to the early 1970s, and then it was converted to an illegal industrial waste storage and disposal facility. Workers stored drums on site, or dumped their contents either directly onto the ground or into trenches, severely contaminating soil and ground water. Wastes included toxic chemicals and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), as well as acids and cyanide salts. In 1978, a fire at the operation destroyed one building and caused extensive damage to two others used for stockpiling drummed wastes. Forty-seven firefighters were hospitalized. Burned building debris, exploded drums, tires, shredded rubber, and contaminated earth littered the property. About 150,000 gallons of waste materials remained on site after the fire. Most of the wastes were in 55-gallon drums stored in the fire-damaged buildings.

The groundwater and soil were contaminated with heavy metals including arsenic, chromium, mercury, and lead; PCBs; plastic resins; and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from past disposal activities. Since this is an ecologically sensitive area, numerous threats existed not only to area residents and workers, but also to surrounding wetlands, wildlife, and marine animals.

Site Responsibility


This site is being addressed through Federal and State actions.

NPL Listing History

This site was proposed to the National Priorities List of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites, requiring long term remedial action on December 30, 1982. The site was formally added to the list September 8, 1983, making it eligible for federal cleanup funds. The site was deleted from the NPL on March 23, 1989.

Threats and Contaminants

The groundwater and soil were contaminated with heavy metals including arsenic, chromium, mercury, and lead; PCBs; plastic resins; and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from past disposal activities. Since this is an ecologically sensitive area, numerous threats existed not only to area residents and workers, but also to surrounding wetlands, wildlife, and marine animals.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html> 

Cleanup Progress

In 1981 and 1982, EPA undertook two separate emergency actions to clean up this site. Workers removed 5,000 gallons of PCB-contaminated waste and 10,000 gallons of other hazardous wastes for incineration. They also removed 155 tons of contaminated solids.

The long-term remedy for the site was selected in 1984. The PADER managed the final site cleanup, which was started in 1987, and completed in the same year. That cleanup included: removing, decontaminating, and disposing of tires, tankers, waste piles, and buildings; contaminated soil removal; and site leveling, filling, and grading. The contaminated soil was removed to depths with acceptable levels of contamination or to the level of the water table. After grading, the site was covered with topsoil and seeded to minimize erosion. EPA, in conjunction with the state, deleted the site from the National Priorities List in 1989. Two five-year reviews of the final remedy were conducted in 1993 and 1999, both concluding that the site remains protective of human health and the environment.

Contacts

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Detailed public files (Administrative Record) on EPA's actions and decisions for this site can be examined at the following location:

U.S. EPA Region III

Public Reading Room

1650 Arch St.

Philadelphia, PA 19103

215-814-3157

Please call to schedule an appointment.